

**Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
Project Nomination Master Sheet**

Please tell us about your project and include as much information as you can. Send the completed form to your area planner. See the map of area planners for contact information.

Name of Project Wilson/Rink Creek Road Improvement

Contact Person Mayor Sandi Marchbanks **Sponsor** City of Gustavus

Phone, FAX and e-mail 907-697-2451, mayor@gustavus-ak.gov

Address City of Gustavus, P.O. Box 1, Gustavus, AK 99826

What is your project? Please describe it. For instance, if it's a road or trail, how long and how wide will it be? If it's a bridge, what will it span? Please provide as much detail as possible.

Wilson/Rink Creek Road is a primary artery that links some 95 residences on the eastern edge of the City of Gustavus with the rest of the City. In addition there are well over 100 additional property owners who currently use the road and who have plans to eventually develop their properties. The road extends 6 miles from the State maintained Gustavus Road at the Four Corners intersection to the Beartrack Inn beyond Rink Creek. The road throughout its length averages about 25 feet wide, broader in some areas, much narrower in others.

The road was originally built as a logging road in the 1950s, with no formal planning and little effort at engineering. For example, no effort was made to construct a base for the road, so the current bed consists of the clays and silts native to the area. Further, the road traverses a very broad and seasonally inundated flatland, but no effort was made to raise the roadbed above that plain, nor address the significant drainage problems, hence sections of the road inundate entirely during heavy rains, and are often wet during many months of the year. During winter months, and particularly during spring breakup, the road can be virtually impassable.

The State of Alaska currently leases a gravel pit at the mid-point of the road, and during the 1970s the State of Alaska auctioned a number of Mental Health Trust parcels near the eastern end of the road. The State has benefited greatly from the existence of Wilson/Rink Creek Road, and although the State has contributed some material for maintenance over the years, the cost of maintaining the road has rested almost entirely on the shoulders of the private residents who live along the road.

Now that Gustavus has incorporated as a second class City, funds will become available for a maintenance program. However, the City finds itself in a position of having to maintain a road that does not meet any semblance of a proper road. We are therefore requesting funding to construct Wilson/Rink Creek Road to meet basic road standards so

that the City can assume a reasonable maintenance responsibility. Improvement of this road is vital to the health, safety and economy of Gustavus.

The proposed project will consist of:

- Bringing the roadbed up to reasonable safe standards which the City and residents can then maintain.
- Add crushed rock to the road (not just sand) to raise the roadbed above the surrounding area (in many areas the roadbed is lower than the surrounding terrain).
- Ditch the road where no ditches exist, or have filled in over time.
- Install culverts in major drainage areas, and replace the damaged, plugged or undersized ones.

Why do you want this project? Is there a safety concern? Do you need us to replace, repair or rebuild something? Please explain.

Safety concerns are paramount.

It is highly questionable if Gustavus Volunteer Fire Department emergency vehicles will be able to respond to fires or emergency calls during many periods of the year, as the road can be virtually impassable.

Gustavus Electric Company has buried their high voltage lines within the road corridor. In many places the marking tape for the buried lines are churned up in the ruts. As the road bed degrades these lines are creeping closer to the surface. On several occasions the lines have been exposed at several locations during flood washouts. The event that exposes this danger could well be fatal.

There are also concerns that school children living at the eastern end of the road will not be able to attend school on days when the road is impassable.

During this past year we have seen families move out of their homes on Rink Creek and choose to pay rent somewhere in Gustavus in order to not have to drive this road on a daily basis.

Are parts of the project already designed or constructed? Will another agency do some of the work? If so, please explain.

The road corridor is cleared of vegetation. Although inadequate for traffic and daily usage, over the years the local residents have put sufficient sand and gravel on the road to make it passable - this will provide a sub-bed upon which a better road can be constructed. Also, although inadequate, drainage ditches have been dug along much of the road, basic drainage patterns are understood, and the areas in need of improvement are recognized. Other than these basic elements, little else has been constructed.

The City of Gustavus, incorporated April 1, 2004, is just now in the process of building a city government and developing a rudimentary budget, so is not currently in a position to

2006-2008 STIP Nomination Form
Nominations due October 8, 2004

help in construction of the road. However, the City, in collaboration with the residents who live along the road, are committed to a long-term maintenance program for the road.

Who will use this project and how will it help them? Will it benefit health, quality of life or the economy? Please explain.

The road will serve as a primary transportation corridor for the 100 or so residents who reside along its length. In addition the road will be utilized by the rest of the community in the course of daily life and business. The dozen or so businesses - many of the tourist oriented establishments - located along the road will also benefit. In addition, the State of Alaska DOT, State Troopers, Game Wardens and Biologists will use the road in the course of their regular (and sometimes frequent) activities. National Park Service Rangers will also use the road on a regular basis when they use it to access parklands on the northern and eastern borders of Gustavus. Also, many out of town Alaskans who come to Gustavus to hunt moose will also benefit from the road. Local hunters, trappers and berry pickers also use the road on a regular basis.

In addition, although not yet decided, there is currently a proposal before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to approve a hydroelectric facility on Falls Creek beyond the eastern end of the road. If this project is approved, some 1000+ acres of National Park lands will be transferred to the State of Alaska for project development. The Governor has expressed strong support for this project. If the project is built, Wilson/Rink Creek Road will see a tremendous increase in vehicle traffic - not just the local residents - but construction personnel, heavy equipment, cement trucks, semi-trailers, and such. Following construction, the State would also be able to open several proposed borrow pits in the project area as rock quarries. All of these activities would cause tremendous damage to the road. It is entirely unreasonable to expect the local residents and fledgling City to cover the cost of maintaining this already inadequate road for this large project if approved.

Who will maintain the project after it is built?

The City of Gustavus, in coordination and collaboration with local residents, will assume complete responsibility for maintenance of the road once built.

Who owns the land where the project will be built? Will be have to buy right-of-way or will this be donated?

Approximately 3.5 miles of the road are platted and on private land. The other 2.5 miles crosses State of Alaska DOT and Alaska Mental Health Trust lands. During the 1970s The Mental Health Trust sold some 22 parcels of land (10 acres each) in the Rink Creek area to Alaska residents with the provision of access along Wilson/Rink Creek Road. There will be no need to purchase right-of-way, as the road traverses platted roadways or roads across State lands that have been designated by State agencies as access corridors.

Do you have a resolution of support from a local elected body or traditional council? If so, please attach.

Yes, the City of Gustavus has placed on the agenda for its next meeting to pass a resolution supporting this project. That document will be sent following the next regularly scheduled meeting of the City Council.

How will you help? Do you have land for right-of-way or in-kind services to donate? Will you contribute money to the project? Do you know the total dollars or percentage of the total project cost to be contributed? (Please note that many types of projects now require a local match contribution.)

Over the past 10 years local residents have invested some \$23,000 into maintenance of the road, as well as individual contributions in time, materials and labor that have not been calculated. These residents have committed to continue that effort if called upon. In addition, the City of Gustavus is budgeting some \$22,000 annually for maintenance of the road (as long as current budget projections hold).

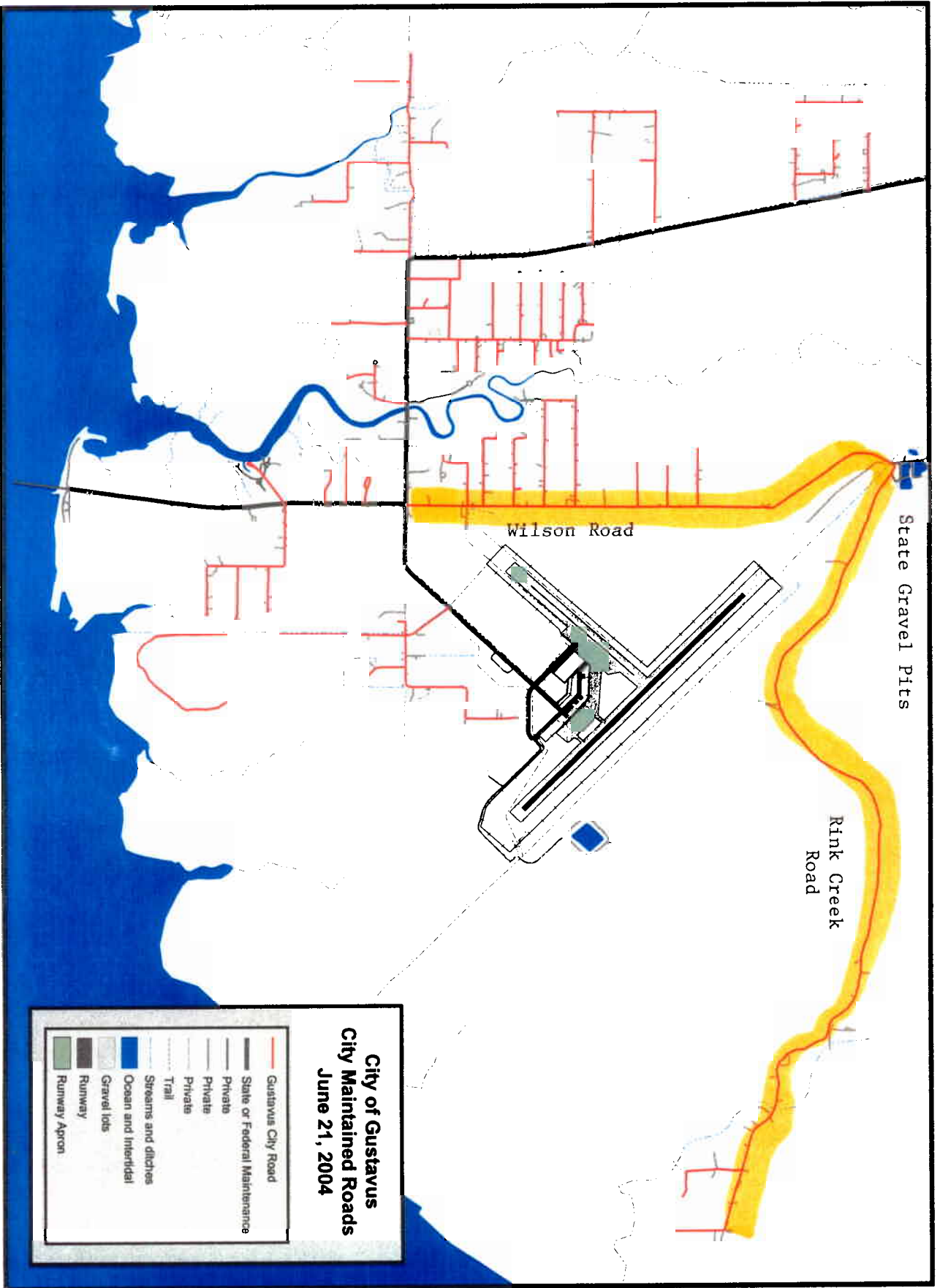
Include any photos, maps or graphics please.

Photos of the road in various states of disrepair are included.

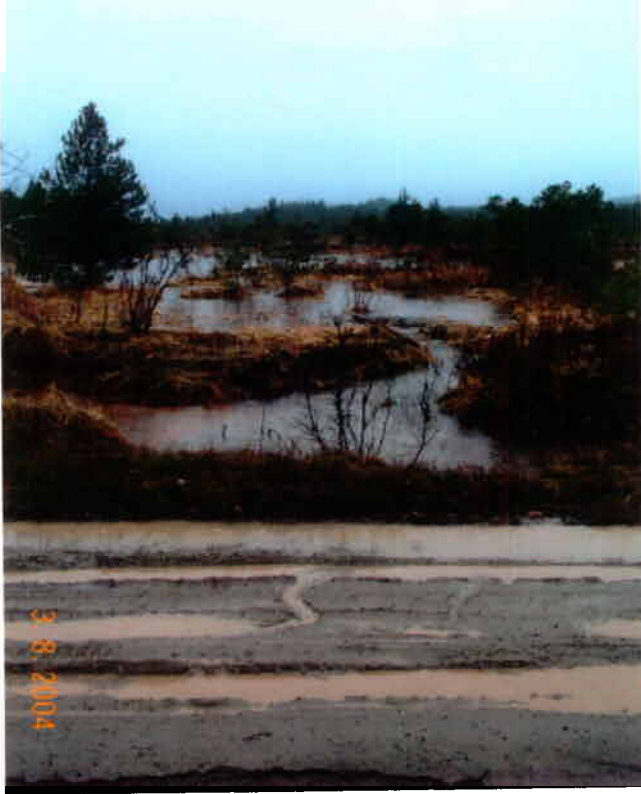
Road map of the City of Gustavus, with Wilson/Rink Creek Road highlighted. .

Call or e-mail the DOT&PF area transportation planner assigned to your community if you have any questions.

Please mail the to the DOT&PF Regional Office that oversees transportation projects in your location.







Mile 1.5 - 2.5 Large amounts of runoff from areas higher than roadbed.



Mile 0 - 1 No ditches - Road has spread and filled ditches. No ditches no drainage



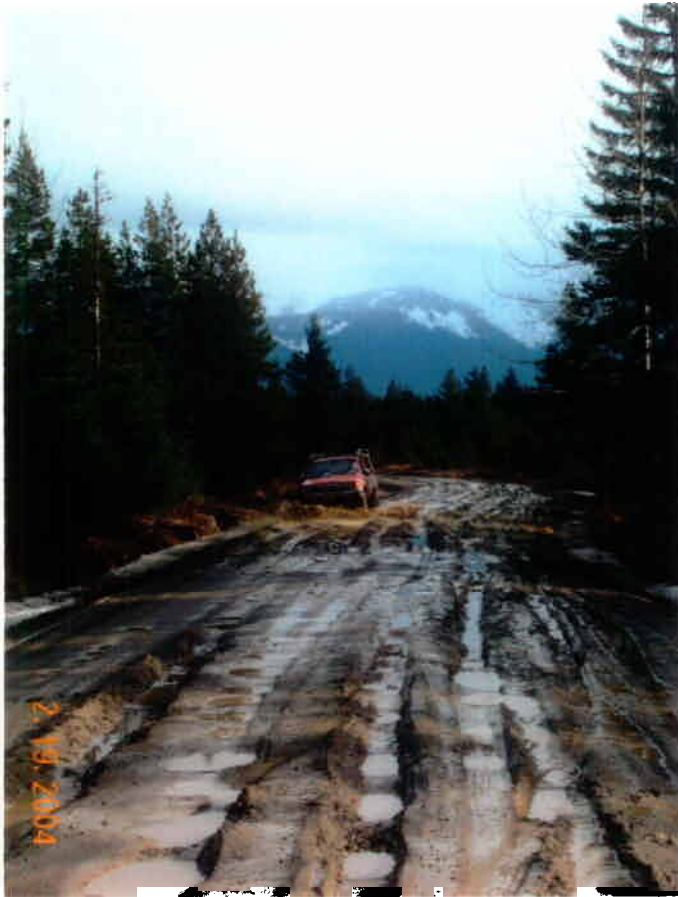
Sandy / Clay road bed pumps water up rapidly during heavy rains and freeze thaw cycle creating very deep slippery ruts separated by hard ridges.



Mile 0 - 1 Ruts in foreground compared to fresh gravel laid in background



Typical of 3.5 miles of Rink Creek Road during heavy rains and freeze thaw cycle



Freeze Thaw cycle has occurred almost continuously these last few winters degrading the road faster than before



Typical confused resident due to spinal trauma...